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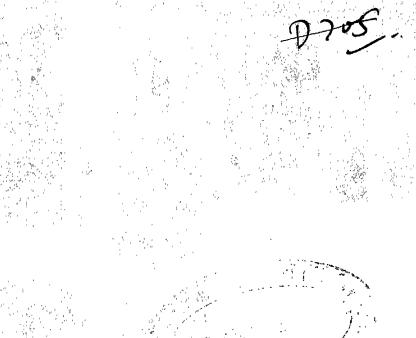
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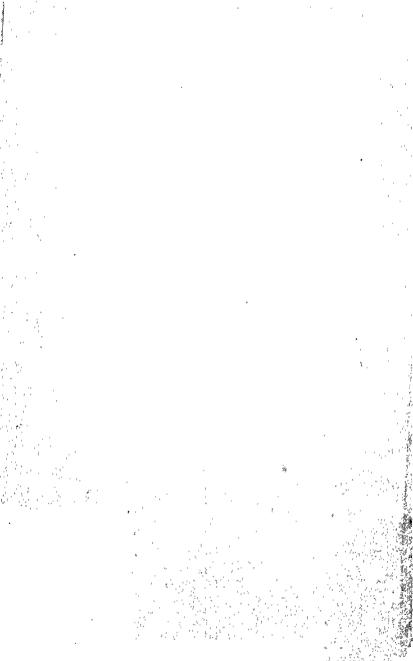
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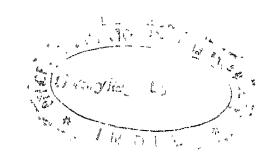
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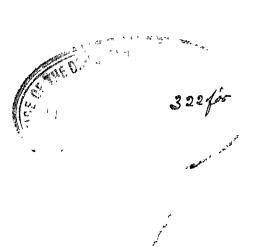


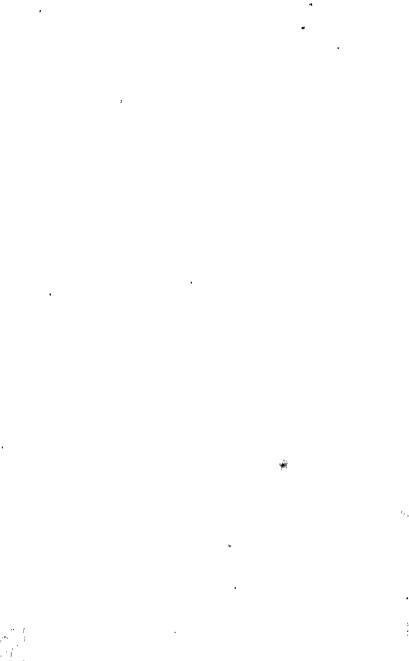






THE SHRINES OF SITAKUND.





THE 2649

SHRINES OF SITAKUND

IN THE DISTRICT OF

CHITTAGONG IN BENGAL

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PREFACE.

I visited Sitakund in 1880, during the Siva-Chaturdasi festival. From the notes then recorded by me, I wrote a paper on the Shrines of the place, which was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the 2nd March, 1881. This paper, with some additions and alterations, is now presented before the public.

It was owing to the kindness of the late Pandit Bhairava Chandra Nyayaratna of Chittagong, that I was able to obtain copies of some of the sacred writings to which reference is made in the following pages. To my old and revered tutor, Pandit Haris Chandra Kaviratna, of the Presidency College, my thanks are also due for his kindly going through the proofsheets, and helping me with his suggestions.

A. S.

Calcutta, June 15th, 1884.



SHRINES OF SITAKUND.



Sitakund is an outpost in the Police circle of Kumiria attached to the Sudder Subdivision of the district of Chittagong in Bengal. It is bounded on the east by the Sitakund range, on the west by the Bay of Bengal, on the north and south by the Kumiria and Merkaserai thanas respectively, the population by the last Census being 36,581 souls.

The city of the same name (lat. 22° 37′ 55″; long. 91° 43′ 40″), which is at a distance of 24 miles to the north of the Sudder Station, is not mentioned by name in the Ayeen Akbery; but it appears to have been a place of considerable importance at the time when Chittagong first came into the possession of the English. Mr. Harry Verelst, the first Chief of Chittagong, who afterwards succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the Governorship of Bengal, reported his arrival from this place on the 3rd January, 1761.* Lord

^{*} Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, page 5.

Teignmouth visited it in 1778,* and Sir William Jones in 1786.† It was also inspected and described by Captain Pogson in 1831,‡ and Sir Joseph Hooker in 1854. Sitakund still continues to hold its position as a place of note in the district. It has a moonsifee of its own, which, though still going by its name, has, however, been recently removed to an adjacent place. The trade of Sitakund is not inconsiderable, lying as it does on the Grand Trunk Road between Dacca and Chittagong, which is always fit for wheeled traffic, and being accessible within a short distance by boats throughout the year. There is not certainly a more beautiful place on earth. Nature has adorned it with all that is sublime and beautiful in creation. It is a meet residence for gods. The grand mountains, the beautiful waterfalls, the volcanic springs, the clear streams, the thick forests, and their conflagrations at night, the numberless odorous flowers, the fragrant breeze and the sweet song of birds,—these no one can forget, who has once been there.

- * Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol. II, p. 55.
- † Ibid. Letter from Sir William Jones to Mr. Justice Hyde.
- ‡ Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204. The date of Pogson's visit to Sitakund, as given by the late Dr. Oldham, quoting Corbyn, in his paper on the Thermal Springs of India edited by his son, is 1778. (Vide p. 59, Part II, Vol. XIX. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.) But this is not correct, as will be seen from Captain Pogson's own Narrative. It was Lord Teignmouth who visited the place in 1778.

[§] Hooker's Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 352.

It is, however, from a religious point of view, that the place is held in the greatest esteem. In Eastern Bengal, which is condemned by the orthodox as the Mleccha country, not visited by the Pándavas (पाडवर्गितरेस), there is no place so renowned as Sitakund. It is one of the 51 sacred Pithas (पीड),* on which fell scattered the limbs of Satí, the consort of Siva, whose dead body was cut to pieces by the discus of Vishnu. "On Chandrasekhara in Chittagong in Eastern Bengal," says the Adipurána,† "there is a place of great sanctity, which

* चटले दचवाक्तमें भैरवश्रद्धारेखरः। यक्तारूपा भगवती भवानी तत्र देवता॥

इति तन्त्रचूड़ामणी शिवपार्वतीसंवादे एकपश्चामस्त्रियोत्तरी पीठनिर्णयः।

Vide Sir Raja Radhakanta Deva's Sabdakalpadruma, Vol. III, p. 2150, and Vol. VII, p. 702 (supplement) 1st Edition.

চউপামে ডানিহস্ত অর্ধ অনুভব। ভবানী দেবতা চন্দ্রশেথর ভৈরব॥

> ভারতচন্দ্র রায়ের অন্নদামঙ্গল। শুক্রবারের ১ম নিশা পালা।

Date of composition of Annadámangala, S. 1674=1753 A. D.

বেদ লয়ে থবি রুসে বুক্ষ নিরুপিলা। সেই শকে এই গীত ভারত্রচিলা॥

† देवाभिस्वितं चेचं वक्षप्राक् चास्ति ग्रेंस्वे । स्रतिगृष्टां महत्युष्यं चहती चन्द्रग्रेखरे ॥

A'dipurána, Vide, p. 105 Chandrasekhara Máhátmya by Uma Charan Mookerjoa. is the favourite and secret resort of the gods." "We have heard before," the Rishis said in the Devipurana,* "of Sitakund situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds". "Ayodhya, Muttra, Maya (Hurdwar), Benares, Kánchi (Conjeveram), Avanti (Ojjein), and Dwaraka—these seven places are the dispensers of salvation. In Benares, Mainaka, Ekamravana (Bhubanesvara), Kailás and Sumeru, Siva constantly dwells. During the Kali Yuga," says Vishnu to his consort, in the Váráhí Tantra,† "Chittagong is the habitation of the gods." So again Siva said in the Linga Purana,‡ "I shall dwell with thee,O

- * चीताकुण्डं त्रृतं पूर्वं चैकीकाकानपावतं । चन्द्रशेखरमधासं भारताख्यासमन्त्रितम् ॥ द्रित चीट्वीपुराणे चैनमाचान्ने चिष्काखण्डे सिवरचस्य-कथने त्रीत्रीचन्द्रशेखरप्राप्तिरष्टाद्शेऽध्यायः ।
- † खणेश्वा सणुरा साथा काशी काश्वी खनिनका ।
 पुरी दारानती चैन पर्रेता मुक्तिदाधिकाः ॥
 वाराणची च मैनाक एकासननमेन च ।
 कैलासरजनादिख सर्णादिश्वरूपचकः ॥
 एतेषु श्रद्धरो नित्यं नसेदेनीसमन्तितः ।
 कली खानस सर्वेषां देनानां चहले ग्रुभे ॥
 दित श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रं श्रीनारायणनारायणीसंवादे
 हतीयः प्रकलः ।
- ‡ कीकानाञ्च हिताधीय वज्जस्य चन्द्रशेखरे । स्वया सत्त विस्थासि सत्यं सत्यं वरानने ॥

Linga Purana, Vide. p. 105, Chandrasekhara Máhátmya by Uma Charan Mookerjea. fair-faced one, on Chandrasekhara in Bengal for the good of men." The sanctity of the shrines of Sitakund is a favourite theme with the writers of the Puranas and Tantras, and passages bearing on the subject need not be multiplied. The shrines attract pilgrims from all parts of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, as also from the North-Western Provinces. The Siva-Chaturdasí festival, according to Dr. Hunter, is attended by ten to twenty thousand pilgrims. The minor gatherings, at the eclipses of the sun and moon, and at like occasions, number from two to four thousand devotees.

The leading works which treat of these shrines are (1) Devipurána, (2) Váráhí Tantra, (3) Chinnamastá Tantra. Passing mention of them may also be found in the following works: A'dipurana, Linga Purana, A'di Brahma Purana, Churámani Tantra, Yogini Tantra, Váyu Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Tantrasára, and Kálímáhátmya. A passage "असनाथ-सन्द्रनाथसन्द्रभेखरपर्वते"is generally referred to the Amarakosha. In Colebrooke's excellent edition of the Dictionary, I searched for the passage in vain, but have succeeded in tracing it to the Mahálingesvara Tantra in the prayer of a hundred names addressed to Siva. The exact age, in which the aforesaid Tantras and Puranas were written, cannot be ascertained. According to Dr. Monier Williams, "if the oldest known Purana is not older than the sixth or

^{*} Vide Hunter's Statistical Account of Chittagong, p. 232.

seventh century, an earlier date can scarcely be attributed to the oldest known Tantra."* There is no mention of Chittagong, or of the shrines of Sitakund, either in the Rámáyana, or in the Mahábhárata. According to Dr. Hunter, there is mention in the latter epic of Trilochana, a powerful king of Tipperah, who is supposed to have been contemporary with Yudhishthira; but I have failed to trace it, though I came across two passages which speak of the conquest of that kingdom by Sahadeva and Karna.t We also know that the early kings of Tipperah were staunch Sivaites, and that a portion of the expenses of the Sitakund shrines is still defrayed by the Tipperah Raj. § Dr. Hunter | has also informed. us, that "in 1512 the Tipperah General conquered Chittagong." But when these shrines, now so cele-

- * Dr. Monier Williams's Indian Wisdom, page 504.
- † Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, page 464.
 - ‡ चैपुरं खवणे काला राजानमिनतीजसम् ।
 निजयाच मचावाञ्चस्यसा पौरवेश्वरम्॥ ५८॥
 द्रित सभापवेणि दिग्विजयपवेणि सचदेवदिग्विजये
 एक चिंग्रानेगऽध्यायः ।

मेचिनं पतनकीव विपुरां की मलां तथा ।
एतान् सवीन् विनिर्जित्य करमादाय सवैमः ॥ १ ॥
दिचिषां दिममास्याय कर्षी जिला मचारथान् ।
विकार्षं दाचिषात्मेषु योधयामास स्त्रतजः ॥ १० ॥
दत्यारक्षके पवेषि वोषयात्रापर्वेषि कर्षेदिग्विजये
विपश्चामदिधिकदिम्ततमें।ऽध्यायः ।

[§] Baboo Kailas Chandra Sınha's Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

^{||} Hunter's Statistical Account of Hill Tipperah, p. 465.

brated, were first established, has not yet been determined. It is remarkable that they were not visited by Hwen Thsang, the Chinese traveller, nor even by the great Chaitanya who is known to have made a pilgrimage to all the known shrines of his time. There can, however, be no doubt as to their recent establishment. Most of the shrines are supposed to have become endued with merit, only in the Kali Yuga. Among the springs mentioned by Captain Pogson in 1831, is Chandur or Chandra Kund, "said to have appeared within the last four months."* In a list of objects of antiquarian interest issued by the Government of Bongal, it is said that the temple of Sambhunath was built about 450 years ago, and that of Bárabakunda about 400 years ago, but on what evidence I cannot say. +

Sitakund (Spring of Sita) derives its name from a spring consecrated to Sita, the deified heroine of the Rámáyana. The spring, however, is no longer in existence. A tradition prevails, that there was at one time a dispute between the followers of Vishnu and Siva about the possession of the spring, and that the dispute was referred for arbitration to one Kali Charan Roy, a zemindar and dewan in the

^{*} Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 204.

[†] A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, 1879.

local Collectorate,* who, it is said, caused the spring to be filled up to terminate the difference. According to another account, the destruction of the spring was effected by the then Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta informed me that he had made several attempts to restore the sacred place, but that, though he had dug deep all around the site indicated by the sacred books, he could find no trace of the spring. His belief was, that there had been at the place no such spring as is described in the sacred books, and he told me as a reason for this belief, that the place in question was found devoid of all trace of bitumen which was found by him in the adjacent hot springs.†

- * Kali Charan Roy was dewan of the Chittagong Collectorate from 1785 to 1790. He was one of the farmers with whom Mr. Godwin concluded the Settlement in 1774 On the 5th January, 1786, Mr. Crofts, who at that time was Collector of Chittagong, sold his right, title, and interest in the island of Moiscal, for Rs. 40,000 to Kali Charan Roy. The latter was succeeded in the property by his widow Probhabaty, who did not die till 1826. She had no children of her own, but adopted one Chundy Churn, who died in 1820, leaving a son, Shorut Chunder. Shorut being a minor, the estate came, on Probhabaty's death, under the Court of Wards. Shorut Chunder died recently, and the present zemindar is his son, Koilash Chunder. Vide Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pages 165-6, and page 223.
- † When this paper was read before the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Mr. V. Ball remarked that though it may be true that there never was a hot spring in the locality mentioned, the absence of any trace of bitumen was no proof of its non-existence. Vide Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for March, 1881, page 51.

Captain Pogson described Sitakund* as "of pure limpid water," though Bárabakunda is the only spring he actually visited. He, however, subsequently obtained information of the other springs, and sent a careful person to bring a description and some bottles of water from each. The following account quoted by Captain Pogson from a Gazetteer is noteworthy: " About twenty miles to the north of Islamabad is a remarkable hot well (named Sectacoond), the surface of which may be inflamed by the application of fire. Like all other remarkable phenomena of nature, it is esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, as is likewise another hot spring near to Monghir." As will presently be seen, the spring of Sitakund is described in the Devipurana as hot-watered and igneous, which agrees with the above extract from the Gazetteer. But as Sitakund is also the name of the outpost containing all the groups of springs and shrines at the locality, I think it is unsafe to conclude, that the specific spring Sitakund existed at the time when the passages above referred to were written.

^{*} Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateogaon, p 204.

⁺ Ibid, page 99.

[‡] The popular behef is, that the spring of Sitakund is still in existence. In his clever nevel, called Chandranath after the god on the Chandrasekhara hill, the second edition of which appeared last year, Baboo Khettra Pal Chakravarti makes the hero visit Sitakund (p. 203) in 1266 B. S, that is, about 25 years ago All old persons, however, who have visited the place, agree in saying that the spring has not been in existence for a much lenger time. Balaba-

spring existed in 1831, at the time when Captain Pogson wrote his Narrative, it must have been destroyed in recent times. But the destruction of a spring, held in such an esteem by the Hindoos, would not have failed to attract the notice of the authorities. I am not aware of any official report regarding the destruction of the spring.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana** of the shrine, and of its destruction:

40-41.—The Rishis said: We have heard before of Sitakund, situate on the mount of Chandrasekhara, a spring known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. If thou hast any kindness for us, O sun of knowledge, do thou tell us of it, and thereby dispel our ignorance; for about this people ask of us.

42-3.—The Suta replied: For the performance of kunda, and not Sitakund, is about 20 miles to the north of Chittagong.

* भ्रष्टषय फचुः।

चीताकुष्डं त्रुतं पूर्वं चिलेकिजनपायनम् । चन्द्रशेखरमध्यस्यं भारताख्यासमन्वितम् ॥ ४० ॥ यदि तेऽसि क्षपा नाथ तदद ज्ञानभास्तर । सस्ताकमज्ञानम् सर लीके प्रस्ता यदीदशी ॥ ४९ ॥

स्द्रत खवाच।

धीतासानविधानार्थं स्वीकानाम् पावनाय वै।
महामुद्ध महारम्थं तत् कुष्डन्तु विनिर्म्धतम् ॥ ४०॥
बाङ्वामिविसित्रन्तु निम्नमुख्योद्कं द्विजाः।
स्वातपवाधितं दुमैः सर्वीपवनसन्निभम्॥ ४२॥

Sita's ablution, O twice-born ones, and for the purification of men, was made that spring, the most secret and beautiful, volcanic, deep, hot-watered, surrounded by trees as by an umbrella, forming one continuous grove.

- 44.—In that lake bathed Sítá, born of the Earth, with her husband and brother-in-law, and devoutly offered oblations to her favourite deity.
- 45.—There also bathed the lions among the twiceborn, as also the chiefs of sages and Munis, who have attained perfection, dwelling to the north of it.
- 46.—What account shall I give of this spring, the most sanctifying of all? I shall only recount its merits: listen to me, O most excellent of the twiceborn.
- 47.—When Ráma, debarred from accession to his father's throne, had gone to the hermitage of S'arabhanga, he went, in accordance with his direction, to a city lying towards the north-east.

यम भीता ष्टिंघवीजा सामिना देवरेण वै। साला तन ऋदे देविमछं पन्यार्थ यलतः ॥ ४४ ॥ सानं चक्रः दिज्ञयात्रा मुनिष्टन्दारकास्त्रया। सिद्धा मचर्षयः पन्ति तस्रोत्तरनिवास्तिनः ॥ ४५ ॥ किं वक्तयं कुण्डशं मचापुण्यविधायकस्। वच्यामि तस्य माचातांत्र ऋणुष्टं दिज्ञपुज्ञवाः॥ ४६ ॥ राज्यश्रष्टो यदा रामः सरभन्नात्रमं ययौ। सद्यप्टेशं छला तु पूर्वीत्तरपुरीमगात्॥ ४० ॥

48-9.—In that city he saw a revered sage, versed in the knowledge of *Turthas*, a veritable ocean of knowledge, long-armed, clad in yellow garments, and with matted hair. As soon as he saw him, he reverently saluted him with a meek heart, and enquired of him, "Why dost thou, O Lord, live here alone, besmeared with ashes?"

50-51.—That sage, whose whole body was besmeared with ashes, then opening his eyes, saw Rama, the holy, the cternal, the best of men, accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana, and thus addressed him:

52.—"I have heard that thou hast taken thy birth in the line of kings, only for our liberation from the dire bonds of the world.

58-4.—"How great is thy fortune, who art followed

पश्चेत् पूचं महावार्ङ जटामण्डलधारिणम् ।
पीतवलपरीधानं तीर्थेजं ज्ञानसागरम् ॥ ४८ ॥
हृद्वा नला च पप्रच्छ भन्न्या विनयमानसः ।
कथमच स्थितं देवमद्वीतं विभ्रतिपरम् ॥ ४८ ॥
ततस्व ज्यािलिखिला हृद्वा रामं सनातनम् ।
जानकीलक्षणायान् पविचं पुरुषोत्तमम् ॥ ५० ॥
खवीचत्त रघुवरं स मुनिविभ्रतिषरः ।
श्रुतं राजन्यवंग्रे तु जन्ममानप्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ५० ॥
खक्षान् पविचकरणे घारसंसारवन्नात् ।
भावज्ञानं मुन्तिं कुर्व्वन् लीके जन्म प्रकाशितम् ॥ ५० ॥
दयं सीता प्रथिवीजा किसंसिच्चिवसंदिता।
द्रिराराध्या मुन्नकेग्री चापवर्गप्रदाधिनी ॥ ५६ ॥
यस्यानुगामिनी देवी तस्य भाग्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
समुद्रस्योत्तरे तीरे भारतात्वासमन्विते ॥ ५८ ॥

by this Sita, born of the Earth, with her hair unbound, the dispenser of salvation, worshipped even by Siva.

55.—"On the north side of the Indian Sea, there is a spring bearing her name, well known throughout India, which is the purifier of the three worlds. Know her not merely as thy wife. Verily she is Yoganidrá herself.

56.—"Deeds unaccomplishable by thee can easily be achieved by her; she is destined by the Fates to humiliate thy pride (to eclipse thy glory).

57-60.—"It is through my good fortune alone, O Rama, that thou hast come here with her. On the mount of Chandrasekhara, southwest of this country, was built by Siva, a spring of her name. Behold that spring, Sitakund, glowing with fire, situate on the west of Sambhunath, south of the Vayu hills, north of

खस्मा नामा कुष्डमिस निकीकजनपावनम्।
न तव रटिस्णी राम योगिनिदेयिमध्यते॥ ४५॥
तवाभक्यं कस्मे यदा खनयावसीसाद्यतम्।
तवाभिमाने नष्टे तु विधिनेषा नियोजिता॥ ५६॥
मम भाग्यवद्याद्या खनया समुपस्थितः।
प्राचीदित्रणयोर्मध्ये श्रीचन्द्रभेखरे गिरी॥ ५०॥
तच भगेण तद्यामा कुष्डमेकं नियोजितम्।
स्यमुपस्थिमे विप्रासद्यायगिरिद्विणे॥ ४८॥
नाभगशोत्तरे चैव फल्गुपस्थिमतः स्थितः।
स्योतिर्मयाद्यः प्रतीत्यां वाड्वामिसमन्तितम्॥ ५८॥
पश्चेद तु महाकुष्डं सीतानामा नियोजितम्।
सीता ग्रीतस्थुक्ता या सेयने सहसारिणी॥ ६०॥

Nábhigangá, west of the Phalgu, below Jyotirmaya. That Sita is thy cheering consort."

61-3.—Thus speaking, the excellent sage fixed his eyes on them. Greatly wondering, Rama passed the night there with his wife and brother, and at dawn visited Chandrasekhara in the company of the well-wishing Muni who, on arriving there, went into the spring, and facing the sun chanted the two-lettered mantra.

64-66.—Then, leaving Rama at the place, there stepped into the spring Sita, the primitive energy, the revealer of the seat of Brahma, adored by Ananta and other gods, blue as a cloud, ever complacent, three-eyed, red-lipped and fair-haired, her form glowing with fire, adorned with eight hands, and surrounded with banner and chámara (yak-tail).

द्रस्युक्ता तं मुनिवरः परस्यरं विकीकयेत्।

प्रभातायान् ग्रवैय्याम् श्राह्मजायाममन्तितः।

ययौ श्रीचन्द्रग्रेखरं मुनिना परमेष्टिना ॥ ६१ ॥

ग्रमातायान् ग्रवैय्याम् श्राह्मजायाममन्तितः।

ययौ श्रीचन्द्रग्रेखरं मुनिना परमेष्टिना ॥ ६१ ॥

गला मुनिवरस्य कुष्डमध्ये व्यवस्थितः।

स्वर्याभिमुखमास्थाय जपन्मन्त्रश्च द्याचरम् ॥ ६२ ॥

रामं विचाय चा चीता कुष्डमध्ये व्यवस्थिता।

वीलजीमूतसङ्काणा भुजाष्टपरिग्रोभिता॥ ६४ ॥

केशावलिननी देवी खरुणाधरसङ्गिनी।

कोषानन्यसंशुक्ता ध्वजनामरविष्टिता॥ ६५ ॥

स्वननादिभिराराधा ब्रह्मपीटप्रकाग्रिका।

सादिग्रक्ताः सुप्रसन्ना मन्नाव्यक्रिपणी॥ ६६ ॥

67.—Standing on the margin, Rama saw Sita immersed in the spring. Believing the spring to have destroyed her, dear to him as life, he addressed these words to the Muni:

68-9.—"This spring shall remain in existence for the first four thousand years of the Kali age, and shall after that time vanish from the sight of man. Whoever out of devotion will drink the water, shall obtain the same fruit as may be got by immersion, and shall not live any longer upon earth."

'70-71.—Saying this, the foe of Rávana went to the Mani hill. Having viewed the linga and bathed in the Lavanákhya, he gratified the sage with humble and respectful words, and then returned to Chandrasekhara.

तटस्थे। राघवः पर्छेत् सीतां क्वर्णनिवासिनीं।

सम प्राण्डरं क्वर्णं विभाव रघुवंग्रजः॥ ६०॥

समाध तं मुनिवरितदं वचनमञ्जवीत्।

कलेस्यतःस्टलाण् वर्षाण् लचणायतम्॥ ६०॥

स्थितं क्वर्णं गुप्तमासीत् मानवादर्भनं भवेत्।

भिक्तं क्वाला तु सीतायाः यः कस्थिदा जलं पिवेत्॥ ६८॥

कुण्डसानफलं प्राध्य न पुनर्वर्तते भृवि।

दत्युक्तासी रावणारिभीणपर्व्यतमूर्देनि॥ ००॥

गला दृष्टा श्विलान्नं लवणास्थी निमज्जयन्। श्वर्णः

सामत्य चन्द्रभेखरं प्रसाद्य मुनिसीन्धरं।

सन्दृक्तत्यामास रासे।ऽपि विनयान्धितः॥ ०१॥

72.—Then Rama, delighted, started with Sita and his brother, for the banks of the Godávarí.

According to the above account, Rama, having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga, by his direction turned towards a north-eastern city, where another sage informed him, that on the south-west of that city, there was a sacred spring of the name of his consort Sita (Sitakund), who, he was informed to his surprise, was no other than Yoganidra herself. Rama is then said to have visited this spring in the company of his wife and brother and the lcarned Finding Sita immersed in the spring, whither she had gone to bathe without his knowledge, Rama thought she had been drowned, and cursed the spring as the destroyer of the princess. According to the malediction which, be it observed, is not to have immediate effect, the spring would cease to be visible to human eyes, at the end of four thousand years of the fourth age. The Chinnamastá Tantra is, however, ready with another explanation of the origin of the shrine and of its disappearance.*

चीतामादाय सभाता भिन्नाञ्चनचयोपमां।
जगाम परमाद्धादः पुनर्गोदावरीं प्रति॥ ७२॥
द्रति देवीपुराणे चैनमादातां, चण्डिकाखण्डे शिवरहस्प्रकथने
श्रीश्रीचन्द्रभेखरप्राप्तिरद्यद्रशेऽध्यायः।

श्रीतानाभिसमं कुण्डं पातालं कुण्डमुत्तमं ॥
 सीतापरीचणार्थाय तत्पूर्वेऽग्निः चचार च ।
 ततः सम्राप सा सीता परीचानलतापिता ॥

relates that the spring was the scene of the ordeal by fire of Sita, that it was excavated by the hand of the great Hanumat, and that it was cursed by Sita herself as the site of her sufferings. explanation itself is, however, less important than the manner of its narration. Sita is not described there merely as Yoganidrá herself, or the Primeval Sakti or Energy, and Rama the divine hero who would curb the pride of the Rakshasas. They are the veritable Supreme Duad, the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort who came over to the shrine to offer their oblations. The spiritual guide, according to Hindoo ideas, it is well known, is the embodiment of the Deity itself on earth. The recognition accordingly of Rama and Sita as the spiritual guides of Siva and his consort is significant. A tradition has been mentioned above, which attributes the filling up of the spring to a dispute between the Sivaites and Vishnuvites. It would therefore seem. that this second legend was probably written at a period of Vishnuvite supremacy.

> युगानेनासिसं धर्ने दस्ति तेन विक्तना । सीताकापानसा यन कुण्डनान विचल्रायं॥
>
> * * * * * * * ।
>
> यक्षेन निर्मितं कुण्डं परीलार्थं चनूमता ।
>
> कुण्डपार्श्वचरा भूला तिष्ठति चनुमान् बस्ती ॥
>
> दति विद्यमसातन्त्रे महाकासीसम्बादे पार्वतीमन्त्रग्रहण्
> स्थाननिर्णयो नाम दितीयः पटसः।

However it may have been, apart from the contradictory nature of the two accounts which in itself furnishes a strong argument against their authenticity, both of them-internally incoherent and contradictory as they are-have not the impress of the high authority of Valmiki, the most ancient writer on the life and deeds of Rama, and perhaps the one, who in consequence describes them with the nearest approach to truth. It is true that a few places in the Chittagong Division bear the name of Rama, so that it might apparently seem that the prince had something or other to do with them. There is. for instance, Ramoo, where it is said Rama commenced the Setubandha bridge, but, preferring not to enter by the postern gate the capital of Ravana (to which the bridge would have led him, had he gone that way), he turned round, and constructed a separate bridge at Ramesvara to lead him to the front gate of the metropolis of Ceylon. In the Pátál Puri (lit. the nether world), in a cavern in the hill of Chandranath to which reference will presently be made, a huge stone is pointed out as the cooking utensil of Sita. Similarly, a place or two in the adjoining districts of Noakhally and the Hill Tracts, may be mentioned as bearing the name of Rama and his wife. This reason, however, does not commend itself as very conclusive. For it is a fact that may be well established by numerous instances, that the Brahmins took delight in associating shrines

with renowned names in their religious history, in order to ensure and enhance their sanctity.* Regarding Rama alone, thus we read of the Doobrajpore rocks far off in the district of Beerbhoom, consisting of stones that fell off from his aerial chariot on his return from the Himalayas, when he had gone up there to fetch stones for the construction of his bridge to Ceylon. Adjacent places are shown, as where his wife Sita sat and bathed. A boulder in the neighbourhood is also pointed out, as having been caused by Ravana's attending a call of nature. In the same way, Rama's advent is also claimed for the province of Orissa, (wrongly identifying it with Kishkindhyá mentioned in the Ramayana), where the Rajah of Cuttack up to this time wears a tail in all public receptions, more as a testimony to his descent from the monkey allies of the great hero, than by way of vindication of Mr. Darwin's theory. There are

^{* &}quot;The hot springs of India have attracted the notice of many observers. In the majority of instances these remarkable outbursts of water, at a temperature considerably above that of the waters, or even of the atmosphere in the neighbourhood, often charged with various gases and emitting strong odours, have been endowed by the superstations and ignorant with wondrous virtues, or have been gupposed to be the result of some miraculous interposition of divine energy." Dr Oldham on the Thermal Springs of India, page 1, Part II, Vol. XIX Memons of the Geological Survey of India.

[†] A List of the Objects of Antiquarian Interest in the Lower Provinces of Bengal compiled at the Bengal Secretariat under the orders of the Government of India, pages 4-6.

several places bearing the name of King Bálí, the brother of Sugríva, who was treacherously killed by Rama; Bálikáti, a river; Bálikánta, also a river; Bálisahi, a village. There is also a festival called Báli Játrá. The Sabdakulpadruma also mentions a hill at the place called Kishkindhya.* Against this identification—plausible as it is—is the unfortunate situation of the river Pampá (in Mysore) which Rama is said to have visited, before entering Kishkindhyá the kingdom of the monkeys which, it would seem, coincided nearly with the present kingdom of Mysore.

It is not improbable, therefore, that the above legends of Sitakund are another of those religiohistorical forgeries so common all over India. Certain it is, that Rama's journey southwards was made through the middle of the Deccan and not through Orissa and the Coasts, much less through Chittagong and Sitakund; the following being the most important places in the hero's itinerary as described by Valmiki: the Tamasá. the Vedasruti, the Gomati, the Ganges, Batsyadesa, Prayága, Chitrakuta, the Mandákini, Dandaka, the Godavari, Krauncha, the Pampa, Rishyamuka, Kishkindhya, and Ceylon. There is absolutely no mention, in the great epic of Valmiki, of Rama having gone so far north-eastward as Chittagong, after having visited the hermitage of Sarabhanga.

^{*} कि व्यान्यः पुंची दृदेशस्यपर्वतिष्रोषः। Sabdakalpadruma, p. 579, Vol. I.

The narrative of this visit is contained in Canto V of Book III. When Rama was about to enter the hermitage of this sage, he saw with the Rishi, Indra the Dreaded Thunderer, in all the paraphernalia of his high office, who disappeared on Rama's nearer approach. Replying to Rama's question, the Muni said that the lord of heaven had been to his hermitage to escort him to heaven, but that the Muni could not comply with his request and leave the earth, before seeing Rama, to whom he offered all the merits of his long penance so that the prince by virtue of them might ascend to heaven. Rama, of course, declined the gift, and requested the sage to point out a meet place for his home. The following is his reply:

"Sutikshna's woodland home is near,
A glorious saint of life austere,
True to the path of duty; he
With highest bliss will prosper thee.
Against the stream thy course must be
Of this fair brook Mandákini,
Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide;
Then to his cottage turn aside.
There lies thy path, but, ere thou go,
Look on me, dear one, till I throw
Aside this mould that girds me in
As casts the snake his withered skin.*"

[#] Griffith's Ramayana, Vol III, Book III, Canto V, Page 21.

On the sage giving up the ghost, the holy men who dwelt around flocked to Rama, and solicited his protection against the Rakshasas, which he readily granted. We now come to the Seventh Canto in which Rama is then made to visit this hermitage of Sutíkshna. After the exchange of proper greeting, Rama said:

"But now O saint, I pray thee tell Where I within this wood may dwell, For I by Sarabhanga old The son of Gotama, was told That thou in every lore art wise And seest all with thy loving eyes.'*

In reply to this, the sage begged Rama to take up his abode at his hermitage. Rama passed the night there. On the following morning he asked leave of the sage, and prayed for his permission to explore the Dandaka. The sage answered as follows:

"Go with thy brother, Rama, go,
Pursue thy path untouched by woe:
Go with thy faithful Sita, she
Still like a shadow follows thee.
Roam Dandak wood observing well
The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,
Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere
To penance rites and vows austere."

^{*} Griffith's Ramayana, Vol III, Book III, Canto VII, Page 28.

[†] Graffith's Ramayana, Vol. III, Book III, Canto VIII, Page 32.

Thus it is clear, that there is no mention whatever in the Ramayana, of Rama having passed through Chittagong on his way downwards to the Deccan. The geographical position itself of Chittagong and of the Godavari (to the banks of which Rama in the above legend is said to have bent his way on leaving Chittagong), renders it quite improbable. The attribution of the ordeal by fire of Sita to a hotspring is not a new idea,* The Sitakund of Monghyr is similarly credited with being the scene of the same ordeal, which, it is scarcely necessary to say, really took place at Ceylon, if the father of Aryan poetry is to be believed. The principle of human nature which led to this religious fabrication, is not, however, inexplicable. "I think it is in Macedon," reasoned Fluellen,† "where Alexander is porn. I tell you captain,-if you look in the maps of the 'orld, I warrant, you sall find in the comparisons petween Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is poth like. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also moreover a river at Monmouth;

^{*} In p. 209, Part I, Vol. XVII of the Journal of the Asiatio Society of Bongal, General Cunningham mentions a spring called Sitakund in Kelat, which is nine miles from Dwara, and five from Monali. In Mr. Duncan's account of the Travels in Ceylon, of a Fakeer named Prann Poory (p. 39, Vol. V of the Asiatic Researches), it is stated that "our traveller states that leaving this tank, he proceeded on to a station called Seetakund, where Rama placed his wife Seeta on the occasion of his war with her ravisher Ravan."

[†] Shakespeare, King Henry V, Act IV, Scene VII.

it is called Wye at Monmouth; put it is out of my prains, what is the name of the other river; put it is all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both.'

It is not a little remarkable, that Sitakund, the name of a spring which, no matter whether it existed or not, now exists no longer, should (lucus a non lucendo) give its name to the outpost, and surpass the surrounding shrines in fame. Perhaps during a period of temporary Vishnuvite supremacy, it may have been indiscriminately used for, and may have eventually supplanted, Panchakrośa which, according to the sacred books, contain all the holy shrines of the place. Like the Panchakrośi of Benares, it stretches over 5 kroses (or 10 miles) round the village of Sitakund, being bounded* on the east by the Mandakini, on the west by Vyasakunda, on the south by Bárabakunda and on the north by the Champaka Forest. "This land called Panchakrośa," said Vishnu,† "is the cause of the holy Nirvana. Many a

* पश्चिमे व्यासकुण्डच पूर्वे मन्दाकिनी सृता।
जनरे चम्पकारणं दिल्ले वाड्वामैलः॥
एतत् चेचं मया प्राक्तं पश्चक्रीशं महाफलं।
दति वाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायणसंवादे चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम षष्ठः पटलः।

† पश्चनोश्यित्रं प्रेक्तं श्रिवनिर्वाणकारणं॥ रतस्त्रिज्ञनारे सन्ति कुण्डान्यन्यानि सर्वेतः। सुगोप्यानि प्रयतेन् सम प्रीतिकराणि च॥

rora.

spring is contained in it, most sacred and delightful to me." By far the most frequented of these shrines are Vyásakunda, Bárabakunda, Lavanákhya, and the temples of Chandranath and Sambhunath.

The following account is given in the *Devipurana** of the origin of the shrines of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda.

26-27.—" Do thou tell us, O chief of the Brahmins," said the Rishis, "why Siva, forsaking Kasi and Kailas, resides here in secrecy? Why he said, 'I shall dwell on the mount of Chandrasekhara in the Kali Yuga;' and why thy preceptor remains there, abandoning all else?"

28-29.—"In days of yore," the Suta replied, "seeing the three worlds animate and inanimate, pervaded by the sea of curd, and immersed in the waters of causation, the three-eyed lordly spirit created Brahmá and Vishnu for the purposes of creation.

* भ्रष्टषय जाचुः।

वद विप्रेन्द्र तत्युर्व्वं कथं गूट्लमागतः। विचाय कामीं केलाएं कस्मात् श्रीचन्द्रभूषणः॥ १६॥ कली तिष्ठामि इत्युक्तं श्रीचन्द्रभेखरे नगे। कथने गुरुस्तिवेव चासेऽन्यत् सकलं त्यजन्॥ १०॥

स्त्रत खवाच।

पुरा दिधिसिलिलेन याप्तं चिभुवनं वरं।

कारणसिलिले नग्नं ब्रह्माण्डं सचराचरम्॥ २८॥
इङ्घा तथाविधं सर्वे भगवान् भूतभावनः।
सम्बन्ने ब्रह्मविष्णू च स्ट्रार्थे चाम्नकः सवम्॥ १८॥

4

30-31.—"Thus created, they, infatuated with vanity, considered themselves supreme, and genitor even of the womb from which they themselves had sprung. Even in his very presence they spoke slightingly of him. Then the god, disappearing, became an image of light.

32-35.—"From the sky he then addressed the ignorant gods thus: 'O lotus-born, of the thirteen lingas planted in Kási and other places, I have spoken to you of twelve. Only one I have concealed from thee. During the Kali Yuga, O lotus-born, I shall dwell there with Párvatí. There is no doubt of this. Do thou follow us thither with the never-dying gods.' Thus saying, Siva with Umá vanished from their sight, and went to that place.

भूला तो तस्य निकटेऽहङ्गारेण निमोहितो ।

कतवनी खगभेष खष्टारो तो बभूवतुः ॥ २० ॥
कतवनी लगभेष खप्टारो तो बभूवतुः ॥ २० ॥
कतवनी तस्य प्रमुखे ततः से।ऽपि न दृष्यते ।
खन्ति तिस्य प्रमुखे ततः से।ऽपि न दृष्यते ।
खन्ति तिस्य प्रमुखे ततः से।ऽपि न दृष्यते ॥ ११ ॥
खज्ञानवनी तत् तो च जवाच गगनस्थितः ।
येषु येषु च स्थानेषु मिक्कां स्थापितं मया ॥ ११ ॥
वयोद्श्विभागेन काम्यादिषु च पद्मज ।
द्वाद्मां कथितं तुम्यं लिक्कमेकं जुगोप च ॥ ११ ॥
कली तिष्ठामि तन्वेष पार्वत्या नाच संग्रयः ।
यूयं गच्छत तेष्येव गमिष्येऽहन्तु तच च ॥ १४ ॥
गमिष्यथ ततः प्रसादमरीस्व पद्मज ।
दत्युक्वान्तिहंतः श्रमुखनागाद् जमया सह ॥ १५ ॥

36-37.—Even now the linga may be seen there, called Haragauri. The sinless place remained very secret in the first three ages. For the weal of men, the bull-drawn god dwells in the Kali Yuga in that sacred place with the never-dying ones."

Having thus premised the presence in the sacred place, of Siva and his consort, of Brahmá, Vishnu, and other gods, the story then runs as follows:

38.—Once on a time Vyasa, the son of Parás'ara, the subduer of his passions, began to practise asceticism in the company of the wise residents of *Kasi* (Benares), full of beatitude, knowing the Supreme Spirit, and wearing matted hair.

39-42.—Seeing him the son of Matsyagandhá, of unknown lineage, caste, and character, seated with

खरापि दश्यते लिकं चरागैरीति संज्ञतम्।
तत् वियुगे चातिगुः इं सासीनीर्णस चानधं ॥ १६ ॥
कली प्रकाशक्षेण लेकानान्तु हिताय वे।
सक्तिसामरेसीर्णे वसनं (?) तं द्यासनम् ॥ २०॥
एकदा यासदेवे।ऽपि काशीचेचिनवासिभः।
तपः कर्तुम् सनारेभे पाराश्य्यः परन्तपः॥ ६०॥
महानन्दनिमग्नेसीर्जेटामण्डलधारिभः।
तपसा धीतकलुषः ब्रह्मविद्विविविकिभः॥ १८॥
शिवज्ञानाम्नुभिः सर्वं स्नावितं जक्षमादिकम्।
द्वष्टा तैसं महाप्राज्ञं नारायणमिवापरम्॥ ४०॥
जातिशीखविदीनं तं मत्यग्रस्थायाञ्चं ग्रुचिं।
एकासनसमायातम् एकचेच-निवासिनम्॥ ४९॥
कुलचीनं स्वारं तम्र मुनीनामिव तिलकम्।
शिवते च तदा कोपी यासाय चेचवासिभः॥ ४२॥

themselves on the same seat, and dwelling in the same holy place, although he was very wise, the ornament of the sages, like unto Vishnu himself, the ire of the holy dwellers was roused against Vyasa.

43-44.—Full of jealousy, Bhigu addressed to him the following words: "Who art thou? Whence dost thou come? Whose son and of what family art thou? Where didst thou formerly dwell? Speak the truth."

45-46.—Vyasa replied: "I am the son of Parasara by Matsyagandhá. I have come here to see you, and to worship the god Visvanath. I would dwell with you, O sages of good actions. Let a seat amongst you be granted to me."

47-48.—While he was thus speaking, Vyasa was interrupted by Bhrigu with these angry and unseemly words: "Hear, O ye Munis, the account of his

नता ऋगुपतिस्तन्तु प्रावाचेषीयुतं वचः ॥ ४२ ॥ ऋगुरुवाच ।

कस्त्रम् कुत इस्रायातः कस्य स्त्रनुः क्वलस्य किम्। कस्त्रिज्ञित्वस्तिः पूर्वे वद् सत्यं वचस्य नः॥ ४४॥

व्यास जवाच ।
पराण्रसुतोऽहम् वै मत्युगन्थोदरीङ्गवः ।
युमान् द्रष्टम् द्रहायाती विश्वनाथस्य सैवया ॥ ४५ ॥
युमान् द्रष्टम् द्रहायाती विश्वनाथस्य सैवया ॥ ४५ ॥
युमाभिसु सहावासं करोमि मुनिपुङ्गवाः।
साधुभिः क्वतकसीभदीयतां स्थितिरूममा ॥ ४६ ॥
दृत्येवं वास्थानसु वसोभिसु समन्वितः।
विरस्तो स्र्णुणा यासः कामक्रीधविवर्दिभिः॥ ४० ॥
मत्युगन्थासुतस्तं हि प्रृणु वासः क्वलीज्भितः।
प्रृणुक्वं मुनयः सर्वे सस्य अन्यप्रकौत्तेनम् ॥ ४८ ॥

birth, and thou too, the son of Matsyagandhá, the disgrace of thy family, listen to my words.

49-53.—"While thy mother, begotten of a fish and with a fishy smell, was a ferry-woman in the Jumna, Parasara one day came to the bank of the river and entered her boat. To the Muni's sight she immediately appeared to be endowed with beauty and grace, breathing perfume, a soul-ravishing maid Seeing her, the Muni became full of of sixteen. Thou art the offspring of this union, and art neither a Kunda, nor a Golaka. How canst thou presume to practise asceticism with us? Go to thy own proper place. Thou shouldst not tarry here for a moment."

54-56.—Hearing these insulting words, Vyasa, the son of Satyavati and Parasara, being irate, thought of sacrificing himself to Siva (thus making Siva

यदा ते जननी चासीत् यसुनायां चपेश्वरी ।
भीनजातात् गश्युता तरणीग्टसीता सती ॥ ४८ ॥
देवात् पराभरस्व चागत्य यसुनातटं ।
स्वारुष्ठा तरणीं तस्याः सुनेद्दर्भनतः चणात् ॥ ५० ॥
सुमध्या सुरसा सानि वस्त्रातिसनोरमा ।
सुगश्या षोङ्गाब्दीया रूपलावण्णसंयुता ॥ ५० ॥
दृष्ठा तां सच कामान्यो रितमग्रः क्षतस्या ।
तचीङ्गवीऽसि सः प्राज्ञः न कुण्डः न च गोलकः ॥ ५० ॥
सीऽसाभिस्तं तपः कर्तुम् स्कोसि कथमच च ॥
स् ॥
स् ॥
सुन्ना पराभरसुनो वचसदात्रानिन्दकम् ।
वधं शिवाय दास्रामि चेतसीदम् विभाव च ॥ ५८ ॥

guilty of his death), and said, "O vile and false Siva, holder of the trident, blue-throated, and hide-garmented, why dost thou appear Asiva or in-auspicious to me? Why dost thou harass me so often? This very day I will leave this place."

57.—When he the subduer of his passions was so minded, the bull-drawn and blue-throated god made himself manifest to him the chief of the wise men, and spoke as follows:

58-60.—" Certes thou art a portion of mine, O subduer of thy passions, and learned in the cause of things. There is a seat of mine on Mount Chandrasekhara, very secret, and unattainable even by the gods. There in Chandrasekhara I will always reside in the Kali Yuga with Uma.

खरी शिवाशियं में च वर्तते ग्रूलध्क पुनः।
कथं विङ्क्तनं में ते नीलकष्टाजिनाम्बर॥ ५५॥
इतो गच्छामि खरीव पामराज्ञानवञ्चक।
खमधाविष्ट इत्युक्ता व्यासः सत्यवतीसुतः॥ ५६॥
चेचाद्वर्षिया गनुम् मनश्रक्ते परन्तपः।
तदा ष्ट्रणसनः साचादभवत् तस्य पूर्वतः॥ ५०॥
खवाच तं ज्ञानिवरं नीलकष्टो ष्ट्रष्ट्यजः।
न सन्देशे मदंगस्लम् ग्रूण् वाचं परन्तप॥ ५०॥
चेचं मेऽलीच गुद्धं तत् देवानामपि दुर्जभम्।
मचारम्यं मचागुद्धं श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने॥ ५०॥
देवाभिलिषतं चेचं साम्निलेषेऽस्वि तत्त्ववित्।
सदा कली च स्थास्यामि जमया चन्द्रशेखरे॥ १०॥

61-68.—"Know, O Sage, that Chandrasekhara surpasses all other sacred places. It is covered on all sides with branches of trees, which protect it from The kokilas sing there with sweet the sun and rain. In the recesses of the forest dwell the voice. sages, their looks probing the Inmost Cause of the universe; Brahmá and other gods bathe there day and night; and in the hermitages dwell the Rishis, Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Bhairavas. In that forest are trees with flowers and fruits of the six sea-The forest itself is in one place very deep and secret, and in another place rocky, like the moon half-On the south-west of the forest, O subduer of thy passions, is the Sindhu (the Ocean), the King of all tirthas, to whose embrace the sacred

सर्वचेवाधिकं विद्धि श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं मुने।
सर्वती दुमशाखाभिज्छादितं वारितातपं॥ ११॥
वनिप्रियादिभिस्तव कूजितं मधुरैः खरैः।
ज्ञानिभिस्तच्यदेष खीयते गचनान्तरे॥ ११॥
यव ब्रह्मादिभिस्तव खानं चक्रो खर्चिकं।
इत्रथ्य सगन्धती यचाय भैरवास्त्रया॥ ११॥
सिद्धा मचप्रेयो यच नित्यमासन् तदाश्रमे।
यङ्क्ततु-फल्पुषादीः पाद्पाः सन्ति तद्दते॥ १॥॥
सप्तताश्रद्धात्रगृद्धां वनं सर्वतुंश्रोभनं।
यस्ये नगविष्रेषे यत् प्रत्यासद्चाद्धनन्द्रवत्॥ १॥॥
तस्य दच्चित्यतः सिन्धुसीर्थराजः परन्तप।
यस्य संसर्थमायाता गङ्गा भागीरयी दिज ॥ १९॥
यथा दिमाद्विभे द्वाधाः तथा श्रीचन्द्रशेखरः।
श्रीचन्द्रशेखरं देवैः सदा स्यास्यामि हे मुने॥ १०॥

Ganga offers herself, led by Bhagiratha. As the Himalaya is dear to me, so is Chandrasekhara. There shall I, O Muni, dwell with the gods."

Thus instructing Vyasa, the god then made himself manifest to him in his own proper form which is described at length in the text.

74-78.—"In his own form, O Munis, he then said to Vyasa: "Go there, O most excellent of sages, subduer of thy passions, where I shall dwell with Uma. Thou shalt attain all thy desires; have no doubt about thy success. That seat of mine is the giver of health and wealth, and after death, of salvation. There also dwells the rice-giving Annapurna, delighting in rice and nectar. In this seat of perfection shall I dwell, the lord of Parvati." Saying this to the Muni, the god disappeared.

क्कलोपदेशं नकी च च वभूव परन्तपः। ग्रावकाटिककुन्देन्दुप्रतिमः कुष्डवीज्वलः॥ ४०॥

रतैः इपविशेषेसु भगवानुसया सह ।
वसामि तन इत्युक्तं व्यासाय सुनिपुष्तवाः ॥ ०४ ॥
सन गच्छ मुनियेष्ठ मिस्तियो परनाप ।
सदाभीष्ठं प्राप्त्रासि चेत् सत्यं सिद्धिनं संस्थः ॥ ०५ ॥
सत्चेचं स्विदं खस्ममने च मोच्चदायकस् ।
चन्नपूर्णा निवसति सदान्नकपथारिणी ॥ ०६ ॥
सन्च च स्वामासे चेदन्नदाचाविकासिनी ।
रवसूतं सिद्धपीठे वसनाम् (?) पार्वतीपतिम् ॥ ०० ॥
इत्युक्तामार्के शस्तुः मुन्ये ज्ञानशाकिने॥ ०८ ॥

79-81.—As Nárada had ascended the Srísaila hill, even so went Vyasa, the son of Satyavati, to Chandrasekhara, hearing these words of Siva. There he began to practise asceticism, his mind always concentrated in meditation, repeating the five-lettered mantra, sometimes covered with snow, sometimes near a fire, sometimes fasting altogether, absorbed in Pránáyáma, all his thoughts devoted to the meditation on god.

82.—Pleased at seeing him so devoted, the Self-created then appeared to him. "Ask for a boon," he said, "O subduer of thy passions."

83-85.—Having heard this, Vyasa then replied with folded hands—"When the Munis residing at Kasi spoke scornfully to me, it was by thy command O Lord, that I came here. Dwell thou here, as was thy command while in Kasi. This is the dear boon that I ask of thee."

ततः सत्यवतीस्त्रमुः श्रुला वाक्यं दरस्य तु ।
ययौ श्रीचन्द्रगेषरं श्रीगेले नारहे। यथा ॥ ७९ ॥
गला तपः समारेभे सदा च ध्यानमानसः ।
हिमजालष्टतः क्वचिनुताग्रनसमीपतः ॥ ८० ॥
निराचारः कदा ग्रेते तद्भावभावनागतः ।
प्राणायामगतः क्वचित् पश्चाच्चरमनुं जपन्॥ ८९ ॥
हङ्गा तपे।रतस्वेव खयमुर्दर्षमागतः ।
भूला प्रत्यचमवदत् वरं ग्रुल्ल परन्य ॥ ८२ ॥
तत् श्रुला भगवान् व्यासः क्वताञ्चलिपुटो अभीत् ।
गर्दितं मे यदा देव मुनिभः काग्रीवासिभः॥ ८३ ॥
कतं यथोपदेगं मे काग्रीखेन मदात्मना।

86-87.—"Do thou, O sage," the god answered, "remain on the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the tirthas, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

88-89.—With these words, the god, while yet in the presence of Vyasa, pierced the earth with his trident. Then there alose a spring full of water, with igneous brilliance in the interior, and covered with smoke.

90-93.—Delighted at this sight, Vyasa assumed the

तथा भवान गिरिश देहि चैवं वरं सुहत्॥ ८५॥ समस्ततीर्थेस्वश्वाच तीर्थाधिष्ठितविग्रदः। तिष्ठ सिअसमीपे च श्रीचन्द्रशेखरे मुने ॥ ८५ ॥ गयादीनीं तीथानि यानि मनी र भूतले। तान्यच खापयिला तु चैकीक्यतारणं क्रर ॥ ८० ॥ सिविभेवतु वेऽभीषा इत्युक्तासे क्रपानिधिः। च तस्य प्रथतः ग्रमाः चिग्रत्ते न विखन्यते ॥ प्रद्र॥ साऽपि कुण्डाकतिभूत्वा वारिपुणे वभूव इ। तस्यानारेऽग्रिना दीप्तिः क्रियते धूमवेष्टितः ॥ प्रश दृष्ट्रानन्द्रगते। व्याससस्य पश्चिमतः खयम्। परं धानगतसासे धला पाषाण्विपदम् ॥ १०॥ दिभुजस्पनीतञ्च जटामखन्धारिणं। चनीम्बरपरीधानं कवीन्द्रेः सेवितं खरम्॥ ए१॥ यस्य भाषासिखमिदम् वेदमार्गस्थितं जगत्। वेदागम-मचासिन्धं निर्मय्य ज्ञानदण्डकीः॥ १२॥ पुनातु च तु चैलीकां धर्माधर्माप्रकाशकः ॥ ८३ ॥ इति देवीपुराणे चैनमादात्में। खयम्पुरद्यस्यकथने चण्डिकाखण्डे चप्रदर्भोऽध्यायः।

form of stone, and became absorbed in meditation on its west side. Even now he may be seen there, two-handed, wearing the sacred thread, and clotted hair, clothed in deer-skin, the expositor of virtue and vice, who, churning the ocean of Vedic literature with the rod of his knowledge, for the first time explained the whole universe according to the dictum of the Vedas. Let him purify the world."

Such was the origin of the shrine of Chandranath and of Vyasakunda. As in the legend of Sitakund the spring is to vanish from human sight at the end of four thousand years of the Kali Yuga, so in this legend also the shrines are to be manifest to human eyes at the commencement of the same Yuga. In both cases, great names in history have been brought forward to father the foundation of the shrines. Rama, it is known, is the deified hero of the Ramayana. Vyasa, according to the late Mr. Sherring,* has two or three temples dedicated to him in Benares; but he is not generally considered to be a deified hero. Nevertheless, no name is so distinguished in the whole field of Indian history as the name of this sage. To him is ascribed the compilation of the Vedas and Puranas. To him is attributed the fatherhood of the fathers of the Kauravas and the Pándavas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the sage should have been made to

^{*} Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindus, p, 118.

play the part that he has been made to play in the foregoing passage. This, however, is not the first time, that he has been credited with the ambition of founding a shrine. The Annadámangala relates a like attempt on his part. Expelled by Siva from Kaśi (Benares), Vyasa began to practise extremely mortifying austerities, in the hope of raising a shrine that would, in every respect, surpass the Kasi of Siva. He had well nigh succeeded in his object, when Uma, Siva's consort, one day appeared before him in the guise of an old, deaf, and decrepit woman, and asked him what merit a man would acquire by dying at his tirtha. Vyasa replied that the man would obtain salvation. But still the old woman pretended not to have heard his answer. and repeated the question again and again. Vexed at this, Vyasa said that the man would become an ass, who died there. Siva's consort, then assuming her own form, said "so be it," and vanished from the place.* The later attempt of Vyasa to found a tirtha in Chittagong appears to have been more successful. He not only succeeds in conciliating Siya, but also obtains from him the much-desired boon, "Do thou, O sage," the god is made to have said, "remain on

> * ডাকিয়া কহিলা জোধে কাণের কুহরে। গর্দভ হইবে বুড়ী এখানে যে মরে।। বুঝিনু বুঝিনু বলি করে ঢাকি কাণ। তথান্ত বলিয়া দেবী কৈলা অন্তর্ধান।।

Annadamangala, p 158. This legend is based on the Kasikhanda of the Skanda Purana.

the mount Chandrasekhara near the ocean, as the guardian deity of this holy place, and make thyself the saviour of the three worlds by planting over it all the tirthas, such as Gaya and others, that exist on the face of the earth. May all thy desires be successful."

The pilgrim to the shrines of Sitakund generally takes up his quarters at the lodging-houses of the Adhikáris, a class of Brahmins, who send out emissaries called Pándás to almost every district of the Lower Provinces, in order to persuade people to undertake a pilgrimage to these shrines. Pándás serve as guides to the pilgrims, and, in the shape of remuneration, get from the Adhikaris their passage-money as well as a portion, generally the fourth part, of their eventual gain; for the Adhikaris, besides the rent of the lodging-houses, also receive whatever the pilgrim offers to the gods, clothes, cows, horses, palkis, silver and gold ornaments,—the kar or the visiting cess, which consists of eight annas only under the District Magistrate's orders, being paid to the Mohunta for the maintenance of the shrines. The earnings of the Adhikaris average Rs. 5,000, and sometimes rise to Rs. 10,000. They have now-a-days found competitors in people ** of other castes, who also have set up lodginghouses of their own. The most opulent Adhikaris are Ramahari Adhikari, Chandrasekhara Adhikari, Gopínath Adhikari, and Akhil Chandra Adhikari. Hinduism is, however, at a discount in Chittagong.

The few Brahmins that may be found there, are certainly not the ornaments of the learned class. Some excellent rules were framed by Mr. Kirkwood, lately Magistrate of Chittagong, for the construction and ventilation of the lodging-houses. These, together with a hospital erected near the local bazar, have served to prevent the spread of disease which, in former days, used to originate and spread around, from the large concourse of people that assembled at the melas. The Adhikaris have now to take out licenses from the Magistrate to lodge pilgrims, which are refused, if their lodging-houses do not conform with the prescribed rules.

Settling himself in one of these lodging-houses, the pilgrim proceeds to bathe in the Vyásakunda referred to above. This is a small tank, 120 × 90 hands, full of mud and shrubs, the water being so impure that one would abhor the touch of it. I was informed that, small as the tank was, it was believed that no one could swim across it, or throw a stone from one side of it to the other. After bathing in the Kunda which, however, does not indicate any signs of being of an igneous nature as related in the legend translated above, the pilgrim makes offerings to the Bata (Ficus Indica) tree, underneath which Vyasa is said to have performed the Asvamedha sacrifice.* This tree

श्वास्त्रमेधनकरे।दिविभिनीद्रायणः ॥
 द्रित श्रीवाराद्रीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणीनारायण्छंनादे
 ततीयः पठलः ।

represents the primeval Bata tree, under which the great Vishnu rested before the creation. It serves as the veritable "door-keeper" of the god Chandranath, and is the presiding deity of the plain below.* It is said never to grow old, and to flower in all seasons for the worship of the god. The pilgrim throws upon the tree-deity clods of earth, of which it is said to be very fond, and circumambulates it. The temple of Vyasa is pointed out, lying on the margin of the spring in a very dilapidated state.

Thence the pilgrim proceeds to the temple of S'ambhunáth, or Svayambhunáth, the Self-created Lord. As you proceed, the mount Chandrasekhara appears before you in full majesty. You feel a presence. No wonder that they said that the gods resided there. Are the Munis still meditating there on God, under the tall pine-trees? Are the gods and nymphs disporting themselves on the hillocks? All the old Hindu associations force themselves on you despite your Western education. The feeling, however, fades away, when you come to the site of the Sítákund mentioned above. According to the Varahi Tantra† there are five Kundas at this place called

* ॐ वटुकः चितिदच्य नन्दी गचेत्रनायकः । निर्विष्नं कुरु देवेग पश्चले द्विष्टः चदा॥ वट्नास्त्रो मचाष्टचः द्यरदारपालकः ।

> इति श्रीवाराष्ट्रीतन्त्रं श्रीनारायणीनारायण्छंवाई त्वतीयः पटलः।

ततः पूर्वेषषादृत्या वायुपर्वतस्तिष्वी ।
 समीपे विष्णुदेवस्य क्रामदीशस्य पश्चिमे ॥

Sitákunda, Rámakunda, Lakshmanakunda, Brishakunda and Nábhikunda. Sítákund, as related above, is no longer in existence. Small holes are, however, pointed out as the other Kundas. Near them, in an old temple are the images of Ráma, Sítá, and Lakshmana. These are stone figures, very awkwardly done, unlike the graceful idols of Calcutta.

Jyotirmaya consists of flickering tongues of volcanic flames in the right side of the ascent to the temple of Sambhunath. The flames, it is said, disappear altogether at the touch of the impious. When we visited Jyotirmaya, we found that it had been completely put out; and it was not till the Mohunta of Sitakund, who was acting as our cicerone, brought another light in contact with it, that the tongues could be lighted again. It is said that the flames move about from place to place, sometimes appearing in the temple of S'ambhunath, sometimes in other places, and at times burn a whole forest.

> पश्चकुण्डान्तितं स्थानं परमं अश्वदायकस् । ष्टषकुण्डं परं यस्य प्राग् न्येतीश्वरात्मकस् ॥ ततः अञ्चादयः सुराः नित्यं तिष्ठन्ति चानचे। पातानादुत्यिता देवी गन्ना तत्पूर्वतः अनात्॥ तन्न स्थानादेवि सर्वपापान् प्रमुच्यते। तस्योत्तरदेगस्यं नाभिक्षण्डं मनाचरस् ॥ तस्योत्तरसम्बद्धार्थं (२) रामकुण्डं मने (चरस्। सम्बद्धारास्य तथार्थे सीतायाः कुण्डमुनमस्॥

> > इति श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे श्रीनारायणनारायणी-सवादे चतुर्थः पटलः ।

The Mohunta told us that, on one occasion when he was coming down from the temple of Chandranath, he was overtaken and scorched by the flames which suddenly appeared in great force, on the way between him and the temple of S'ambhunath. When we visited Chandrasekhara, we found that a considerable portion of the forest on both sides of our way. had been recently burnt down by the fire. portion or other of the range of mountains always exhibits traces of the flames. At night, we witnessed an extensive conflagration on a distant hillock. Lord Teignmouth was probably referring to Jyotimaya, when he wrote the following: "On the side of a hill distant about three miles from the burning well (Barabakunda), there is a spot of ground, of a few feet only in dimensions, from which flashes of fire burst on stamping strongly with the foot. The appearance of this spot resembled that of earth on which a fire had been kindled. I do not recollect whether it was hot to the touch."*

The linga S'ambhunáth, the self-created lord, is said to form part of the body of the hill. A tradition is told that one of the kings of Tipperah made great endeavours to dig it out from the shrine, in order to carry it over to his capital, but without success. He was directed, it is added, by the god to content himself with the goddess Tripurásundarí, whom he accordingly took over to his kingdom.

^{*} Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, Vol II. p. 56.

In the history of Tipperah written by Baboo Kailas Chandra Sinha,* we certainly read of king Kumára having gone to visit a linga in Syámalanagar, which the historian considers to be identical with Chittagong. We also read of his grandson king Taksharao, who was a devout worshipper of Siva, but had failed to obtain a son through the influence of the god, having wounded the god in his feet. Offended at this treatment, the god is said to have left Tipperah. But it is also related that king Taksharao then propitiated the irate god with a sacrifice, and got two sons by his influ-It is not impossible, that this statement may have connexion with the attempt to transplant the linga Sambhunáth; but an old officer belonging to the Chittagong Collectorate informed me, that the belief that the linga formed part of the body of the mount was groundless,-it being a movable stone having artificially imprinted on it in wax the marks of natural lingahood +-- and that the temple was pur-Mr. Caspersz. posely kept dark to avoid detection. the Assistant Magistrate, who was deputed in 1879 to superintend the Siva Chaturdasí mela, proposed

* Babu Kailas Chandra Sinha's Chronicles of Tipperah, p. 5.

† नानाच्छिदसमायुक्तं नानावर्णसमन्वितम् । षद्यमूखं यक्तितं कर्वणं भृवि दश्यते । तक्तिक्रन्त स्वयभूतमपरं खचणच्यतम् ॥

द्ति सिद्धानाग्रेखरः।

Vide p. 257 of the Pránatoshiní.

to the District Magistrate the opening of an aperture in the dome, to serve as a skylight which would prevent people from looking in, as well as give light and air. The well-meant suggestion could not, I believe, be carried out, as it was necessary to avoid what might have been misunderstood as uncalled for interference on the part of Government. The temple of Sambhunath was erected down below in the plateau of the hill, as the ascent to that of Chandranath is not practicable throughout the year, especially in the rainy season which is somewhat long in that part of the country, owing to its being hilly. It consists of two apartments. In the outer apartment are the Bhairava, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumat, Annapurná and others. The presiding deity is in the inner apartment, and is of course, very superior. "The sight of the face of Kramadísa (another name of S'ambhunáth) saves one from future birth."* The linga is of a cylindrical form, about four inches in diameter, and rising about five inches from a cone, the base of which has been walled around.

In the court-yard of the main temple of Sambhunáth are many minor shrines crumbling to decay. There is a temple of $K\acute{a}li$, the dread consort of

* आत्मदीशमुखं दृष्टा पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते।
द्रित श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायण्यंवादे
चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम यष्टः पटलः।

Siva; a mandir of Jagannáth, and Rádhá Krishna; and mount Govardhana so well known in Brindávana. Close by are the eight Bhairavas, and the burial places of some of the Mohuntas of Sitakund. On the left. after passing Sambhunáth, is a sacred spring with pucca sides called Gyákunda,—which is considered equal in merit to the famous shrine at Gaya, --where the pilgrim shaves and bathes, and offers oblations to the manes of his ancestors. Proceeding upwards, the path becomes a mere track, with no attempt at being a regular road such as leads up to S'ambhunath. We now come to the base of mount Chandra-The grand staircase—consisting of about 575 steps, and generally supposed to have been built by one of the kings of Tipperah, -which brings the pilgrim to the temple of Chandranáth at the top of the Chandrasekhara hill, is giving way a little here and there; and unless repaired in time, will render the ascent more difficult in future than in the days before their construction. Chandrasekhara* is the highest peak in Chittagong, being 1155 feet in height, and is situate in the centre of the Sitakund range which, commencing from the

^{*} Chandranáth is the name of the god. The peak is called Chandrasekhara. It is also sometimes called Chandranáth. Dr. Hunter also calls it Chandinath. Although Chandmath is another name of Siva, I have never heard the hill called by that name. It is, however, usual to use Chandranath and Sitakund as synonymous terms.

northern end of the Sudder station of the district, runs without interruption to Tipperah, parallel to the Grand Trunk Road. In the Nurvána-tantra* it is mentioned as one of the Kulaparvatas or principal mountains of India. Wilson in his Dictionary erroneously places it in Arracan. "In the hill of Sitakund there is a stone of two descriptions, one apparently of volcanic formation, and porous, the other solid containing iron." The hill is "formed of a stratum inclined at an angle of 30° north-east and south-west, of hard clay in places; and in others of sandstone. The surface is generally covered with loam, but on the southern slopes of all the outskirting hills, it is red sandstone or sand. "The original temple on this peak, built by a king of Tipperah, fell down in the cyclone of 1848, when the present structure, which is of smaller dimensions, was erected by Ram Sundar Sen, a rich merchant, who has since fallen from his high estate. The temple has little pretensions to artistic beauty. But the view around the peak was exceedingly beautiful. A ship that was sailing far off in the Bay of Bengal, appeared like a bird slowly flying on the horizon.

> * नीलाचलं मन्दरश्च पर्वतं चन्द्रशेखरम् । चिमालयं सुवेलश्च मलयं भस्मपर्व्वतम् । चतुष्कीाणे वसेदेवि एतत् सप्तकुलाचलम् ॥ इति निर्व्वाणतन्ते सर्वतन्त्रोत्तमोत्तमे चरगौरी-संवादे यागविवरणं नाम चतुर्थः पटलः ।

+ Statistics of the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1868-69, p. 25

ascent of the hill itself, it is said, gives salvation.* The god, however, is an ordinary linga. Sitakund was, as stated before, visited by Sir Joseph Hooker. The following is an extract from the account given by him in page 352 of Vol. II of his Himalayan Journals: "The road to the top of Seetakund leads along a most beautiful valley, and then winds up a cliff that is in many places almost precipitous, the ascent being partly by steps cut in the rock of which there are 560 (?). The mountain is very sacred, and there is a large Brahmin temple on its flank; and near the base a perpetual flame bursts out of the rock. This we were anxious to examine, and were extremely disappointed to find it a small vertical hole in a slaty rock, with a lateral one below for a draught, and that it is daily supplied by pious pilgrims and Brahmins with such enormous quantities of ghee (liquid butter), that it is to all intents and purposes an artificial lamp; no trace of natural phenomena being discoverable." I do not know to what flame Dr. Hooker thus alludes. Jyotirmaya is at the foot of the hill, and is also visited by pious pilgrims. But there can be no doubt that it is a natural phenomenon.

In order to visit Virupáksha, a phallic symbol of

* श्रीचन्द्रशेखरारेाचे मुिक्तमान्ने। ति मानवः॥
दिति श्रीवाराचीतन्त्रे नारायणीनारायण्यंवादे
चन्द्रशेखरवर्णना नाम प्रष्टः ।

Siva (similar to Chandranath and Sambhunath, mentioned above), in a temple situated midway down the descent from Chandrasekhara, the pilgrim descends by a north-east route. Many proceed to Chandranath after visiting Virupáksha. The ascent to this temple from the foot of the mountain is not a pleasant affair. Sometimes you have to take a long leap, holding in your hand the frail root of an old If it gives way, you are at once precipitated into the abyss below, which seems unfathomable. On his way to Chandranath from Virupaksha, the pilgrim visits Unakoti Sivalinga in a picturesque spot called Pátála Puri, or the nether world, covered with green foliage, and full of the beauties of nature. The undulations in the rocky surface of the cave. drenched with water issuing from the sides of it, are pointed out as Unakotí or 99 lacs of Sivas. What Mr. Sherring said of its prototype in Benares applies to this: "The actual number cut out on the superficies of the stone is not more than a few hundred; but the Hindoos are not particular in their definition of numbers."* Descending from Virupáksha, we meet the former road again at the This stream is considered to be identi-Mandákiná. cal with the river in heaven of the same name. It is said that the Ganges on starting from the Himálaya divided itself into three streams, one running through heaven called Mandakiní, another

^{*} Sherring's Sacred City of the Hindoos, p. 100.

flowing on earth called Gangá, and the third Bhogavatí, which is in the nether world. The water of the stream is certainly very clear, cool, and sweet.

Of the other shrines, Bárabakunda is a volcanic well. It is about three miles' journey southwards from the Sitakund village, and is situated in the same range of hills. Báraba fire, according to ancient mythology,* originated from the anger of the Muni Aurva, whose mother's womb was about to be ripped open by the Kshatriyas. It was deposited in the bed of the sea, to prevent it from burning the three worlds. It is stated in the Varahi Tantra† that Baraba is the veritable fire which sprang from the third eye of Siva and destroyed Káma, and that it is to burn down the three worlds at the final annihilation. The same Tantra also relates that the spring s four cubits square, with tepid water, and that the

* ततसं क्रीधसञ्चातं की ब्वारिंगं वरणालये।

जस्म के स चैवाप जपयुद्धे महोदधी ॥ २१ ॥

महद्यश्रिरा भूला यनदेदिवदी विदुः।

तमग्रिमुद्गिरद्धात् पिवत्यापा महोदधी ॥ २१ ॥

द्ति श्रीमहाभारते चादिपर्वण चैत्ररथपर्वणीव्यापाखाने भ्रीत्यधिकसत्ततमें। ध्यायः।

चयशिरः = वड्वामुखस्। इति भारतभावदीपाख्यभारतटीकायां नीस्रकाखः।

† यागनेनान्सस्त्राता असमध्ये च दुर्वदः।

कामा भवा च संनीता येन नेनाग्निना पुरा॥

विकीत्वं दद्यते येन समुद्रस्वैव ग्राध्यते।

यगान्ते दद्यते तेन ब्रह्माण्डं सचराचरम्॥

वाराद्याम् सप्तः पटसः।

fire consists of seven flames.* The following account of the spring is given by Lord Teignmouth: † "The burning well is situated about twenty-two miles from Chatigan, at the termination of a valley surrounded by hills. I visited it in 1778, and, from recollection, am enabled to give the following account of it:-the shape of the well, or rather reservoir, is oblong, about six feet by four, and the depth does not exceed twelve feet. The water, which is always cold, is supplied by a spring, and there is a conduit for carrying off the superfluity; a part of the surface of the well, about a fourth, is covered with brick-work, which is nearly ignited by the flames, which flash without intermission from the surface of the water. It would appear that an inflammable vapour escapes through the water, which takes fire on contact with the external air; the perpetuity of the flame is occasioned by the ignited brick-work as, without this, much of the vapour would escape without conflagration. This was proved by taking away the covering of brick-work after the extinction of the heat, by throwing upon it the water of

> * तस्य दक्तिणता देवि क्राप्डं वाड्वमंज्ञकम्। क्रीमाने विद्यते कुण्डं चतुर्हमां सुम्रोभनम्॥ सप्तजिक्वाताकी। विकः स्तिकेश्वरसिविधी। तज्जलमीपदुष्णच तवाग्निः शिवरूपिणः (२)॥

वाराह्याम् सप्तमः पटलः।

[†] Lord Teignmouth's Memoirs of Sir William Jones, p. 55.

the well. The flames still continued to burst forth from the surface, but with momentary intermissions and the vapour was always immediately kindled by holding a candle at a small distance from the surface of the water. A piece of silver placed in the conduit for carrying off the superfluous water, was discoloured in a few minutes, and an infusion of tea gave a dark tinge to the water."

Compare with the above, Captain Pogson's description of the spring-"In front is a building about thirty feet square, over the spring; the descent to it, by a flight of steps, is about fifteen feet; the rising heat was like that of a hot bath. Flames, in successive flashes, were playing on the surface of the water, which, from a column of perpetually rising bubbles, appeared to be boiling. The air they contained, ignited as it came in contact with an ovenlike furnace, which the flames fed, and rendered, on The heat of this self-ignited one side red-hot. furnace rendered the surface of the water tepid, but it is naturally cold. In order to condense, and thereby perpetuate, the flames, about one-half of the spring is built over, with an aperture in the centre of the arch, through which, looking from the terrace above, the flames are seen playing on the Persons bathing, took in their hands and on their clothes the water with the flame burning on it. The uncovered part is a square of less than five feet, and the covered part about the same dimensions. The water is brackish, sulphureous, and chalybeate. A servant drank as much of it as he could hold in both hands united, twice filled, and was so severely purged, that he remained behind, and laid down until its effects went off The water of the Balwa koond has an exhilarating effect, occasions a slight headache, and a sensation of fulness, which soon go off. Its effects are diuretic, slightly aperient, and creative of hunger."*

The well outside the Kunda, formed by water issuing from the spring, is called Básikunda. Here the devotee first bathes and purifies himself. He then bathes in the Bárabakunda itself inside, and offers bel leaves and flowers to the flames to appease the burning god. It is said that at each offer of the bel leaves and flowers, the god roars louder to express his satisfaction. Close by are Dadhibhairava; the temple of Jvalakálí; and the spring of Kumúrí.

At a nearly similar distance and similarly situated is Lavanákhya, the Nuolukka of Captain Pogson and the Naldala Khya of Statistical Report of 1868-9, which differs from Barabakunda in the weakness of its flame and in the increased saltness of its water. The salt-water is used for cooking purposes, though it is said that the salt cannot be eliminated from the water. A tradition prevails that this was tested

^{*} Captain Pogson's Narrative during a Tour to Chateegaon, p. 203.

by Mr. Harvey* when he was Collector of Chittagong, and that he accordingly discharged some persons arrested for illicit manufacture of salt. The water, it is said, cures goitre. Around Lavanákhya are the following: Dadhikunda, a small well fed by the stream issuing from Lavanákhya; Gurudhvani, another Jyotirmaya; Brahma Kunda, a hot spring on the top of a small hill, east of Lavanákhya; Suryakunda, a phenomenon similar to Lavanákhya and Bárabakunda.† Near Lavanákhya a place is shown as where the right arm of Sati, the consort of Siva, fell, cut by the discus of Vishnu. But no idol is seen there, and it is not held in the same veneration as Kálighat, Kámákhyá, and similar places.

Dr. Oldham thus epitomizes Captain Pogson: "There are seven other springs within a circle of

- * Mr. John Inglis Harvey was Collector of Chittagong from 1831 to 1837, with short intermissions, during which he acted as Commissioner of the Division. *Vide* Mr. Cotton's Memorandum on the Revenue History of Chittagong, pp. 118-121.
- † There are Mohuntas at the temple of Sambhunath, Bárabakunda, and Lavanákhya. Of these, the Mohunta of Sambhunath is the richest and the most well-known. He is generally called the Mohunta of Sitakund. The present Mohunta of Sitakund, whose name is Kis, or Ban, is a young gentleman of excellent manners, and of good education. He is also the Mohunta of Adinath, in the island of Moiscal. Of this god the same story is told as of that at Vaidyanath, near Deoghur. The Mohuntas have to take a vow of celibacy, and are succeeded by their principal disciples.

six miles, called Nuolukka (Lavanákhya), Kooaree (Kumári Kund), Dadhee (Dadhi), Burma (Brahma), Suruj (Súrya), Chandur (Chandra), and Seeta (Síta). Nuolukka is warm, vapour ignites on the application of flame, saline; Kooaree is hot, saline, sulphureous, and chalybeate; vapour ignites. Dadhee, water is cold, salt. Burma (Brahma?) very hot and saltish, slightly chalybeate, vapour ignites. Chandur or Chander is on a hill, salt and exceedingly hot ('said to have appeared within the last four months') ignites; Seeta is pure and limpid.*"

From Lavanákhya the pilgrim proceeds to Sahasra-dhúrá, a cataract. The water falls beautifully in thin streams, so as to form a natural shower-bath, from a height of about 400 feet. This is by far the most picturesque and romantic of all the various and wonderful sights of Sitakund. It is customary for pilgrims to stand under it. The water of Sahasra-dhárá is considered to be Siva himself. One cannot forget the bath at Sahasradhárá. It is said, that on the words "bom bom," which are peculiar to Siva, being pronounced, the water falls with gradually increasing force.

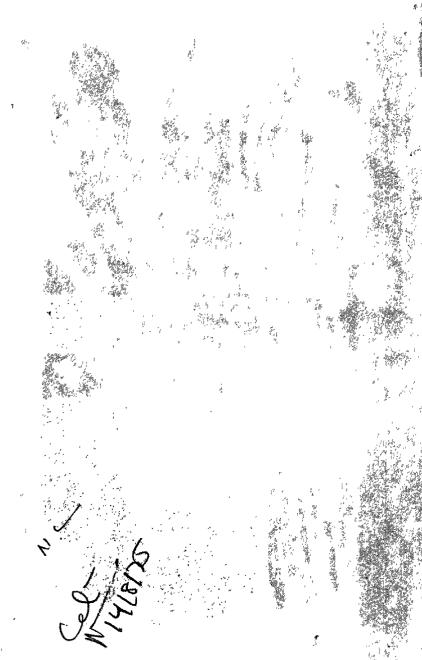
The places noted before are those generally visited by pilgrims. There are many others, for the locale of which the curious and the religious will refer to the Váráhí Tantra, the Bradshaw of the shrines of

^{*} Momoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part II, p. 59.

Sitakund. From what has been said above, the reader who has had patience to follow us to the end of this book, will, it is trusted, be convinced of the recent character of these shrines. There is a sustained effort to plant on this place all the tirthas which are held in esteem by the Hindoos. most famous shrines of Benares, of Gaya, of Brindavan, of Puri, and other places, miniature tirthas are pointed out in Sitakund.* The remarkable phenomena which nature presents in the place, have aided the fabrication of superstitious interpolations and forgeries. The sacred writings, which have been quoted before, bear evident indications of the alternate supremacy of the Sivaites and the Vishnuvites, and of the gradual multiplication of the shrines esteemed by each sect. But the belief in their sacredness is firm, deep-rooted, and universal. A man who holds a different opinion, is looked upon as irreligious and sacrilegious, even in Chittagong, where Hindooism is at a discount. Whether on account of their recent establishment, or from any other cause, the shrines have not received attention at the hands of the antiquarian and the scien-

^{*} There seems to be no end of places called Sitakund. In p. 23 ante and footnote, it has already been stated that there are three formere Sitakunds, besides the Sitakund in Chittagong, viz., those at Monghyr, Kelat, and Ceylon. In pages 22 and 35 of Vol. XVI of Cunningham's Archæological Report, there is mention of another Sitakund situate on the River Gandak in Tirhut.

tist. In these pages they have been described by a layman. But the antiquarian and the scientist will be able to ascertain the time when these shrines were first established, and how they gradually expanded. They will be able to ascertain the effect of the waters of the several springs, and analyze the medicinal virtues, which they are believed to possess. They will be able to ascertain the extent of the Hindoo occupation of the district, and of its conquest by the king of Tipperah. They will, in short, be able to complete the ancient history of Chittagong, which is now so meagre and unsatisfactory.



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